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Committee considers Sen. Brown legislation to keep Three Rivers Secretary of State office open

LANSING – Legislation designed to allow the Secretary of State office in Three Rivers to remain open was considered by the Senate Committee on Transportation Tuesday, announced state Sen. Cameron S. Brown, R-Fawn River Township.

Introduced by Brown, Senate Bill 210 will amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow the population within a 10 mile radius to be added to the adjacent municipal population to achieve the 10,000 population requirement for the location of a Secretary of State Branch office.

“Three Rivers is one of most diverse communities in the 16th Senate District,” Brown said. “The community the office is located in may have a population of less than 10,000, but it serves significantly more than 10,000 people. If this branch closes, tens of thousands of residents would have to travel up to 50 miles roundtrip to Sturgis or Kalamazoo to renew their licenses or conduct other business with the Secretary of State. This would be a burden for senior citizens, single mothers, or others with limited time or ability.”

Current law calls for at least one branch office in each county and community with a population of more than 10,000 residents.

“The current law treats our rural communities unfairly when determining locations for offices,” Brown said. “Rural residents may not live in single large communities, but branches like the one in Three Rivers clearly serve just as many people if not more than branches that happen to be situated within larger cities.”

Three Rivers City Manager Joe Bippus and St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation Director David Allen traveled to Lansing to testify in support of SB 210.

“I’d like to thank Senator Brown and Representative Shaffer for diligently working to save this office in Three Rivers and trying to work for the constituents of our community,” Bippus said. “I appreciate the Senate taking the time to listen to resident’s needs and concerns and I’m hopeful that they’ll react appropriately and give this measure serious consideration.”

Rep. Rick Shaffer, R-Three Rivers, has introduced an identical bill in the House of Representatives.

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